

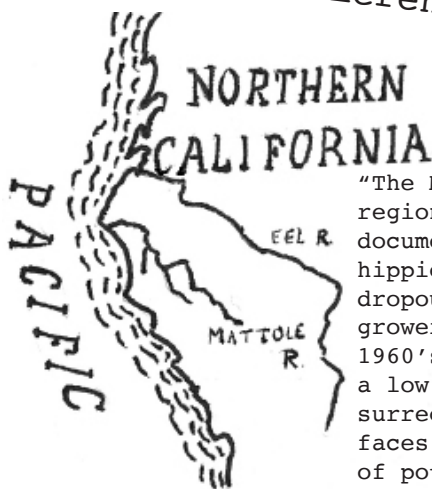


April/May 2018  
(issue one)

Berlin Germany &  
Humboldt/Mendicino  
Counties, Northern  
California, USA

<http://humboldtareaarchive.org>  
the newsletter of an insurgent archive

Human being and becoming is everywhere political and different.  
That being everywhere is different, in particular ways—organizing  
across these differences is a challenge of today.



"The Mateel": the region the archive documents: home to hippies, leftists, dropouts and dope growers since the 1960's. It is home to a low and fluid insurrection, that now faces the challenges of pot legalization.



Berlin: though it could be anywhere. A divided city for many years at the edge of two world, home to radicals and dreamers, now confronting real estate speculation and the hard edge of neoliberalism.

This newsletter is anchored in the Humboldt/Mendicino region known to some as "the Mateel". Home to back-to-the-landers, politicians and drop-outs since the 1960's, the region has sustained a counter-cultural insurrection based partially funded through a cannabis economy; "Humboldt Kush" is known throughout the US for its high, though the political ecology in which the strain developed is hardly known.

The plasticity of human relations, whether political or social is a fact—that is revealed to meaningfully exceeds time and place. People are more than they think they are, and all beings have characteristics that specific ecologies politics either repress or bring to the surface. In one place your an a-hole, elsewhere your a saint.

This is the first issue of the Newsletter for the Fellows of the Humboldt Area People's Archive (global), a non-

academic newsletter from this insurgent archive that aims to be sharp and experimental as hell. The first critical act of this newsletter is to insist that the Humboldt Peoples' experiences matter, elsewhere, too. For this newsletter, we say, "this archive can matter to the former east of Germany." (continues...)

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Let's be real here. Our community's entire socio-economic structure is thoroughly infused with marijuana production, consumption and marketing. Some of us think supporting the existing marijuana prohibition keeps the price up for our very lucrative cash crop which provides the support for living in this area of beautiful scenery but few legitimate jobs. But I believe most of us are wondering if the price we have to pay for playing this increasingly destructive cops, robbers and growers game is really worth it now. Supporting criminalization of marijuana now means we are giving approval for the destruction of our community and our way of life. What is hidden behind the anti-marijuana policies of national, state and local conservative politicians and police agencies is genocide and we are the target.

The dictionary defines 'genocide' as the deliberate and systematic destruction of a racial or political or cultural group. Our Mateel Community is unique in that the majority of the people living here are longterm veterans of the counter-culture revolution begun in the 1960s. Unlike the rest of America in the 1980s, the counter-culture isn't



dead here, but still very much alive, producing activists and culture at odds with the rest of the nation. Of course, our counter-culture characteristics have gone through many changes since the '60s, but many of our basic values and lifestyles remain intact here because, unlike urban hippies, we secured a land base and incomes allowing us independence from the American rat race. It has been reported that our community produces, per capita, more funds and more activists for social change struggles of all sorts than any other American community, including Berkeley. We still pose a threat to rightwing politicians and their corporate sponsors, so, therefore, our community becomes another target for genocide.

Rightwing politicians, law enforcement agencies, and the courts believe that wiping out our primary source of income will break up our commu-

nity and highly open to for fear propaganda rarely is a few li that our either b of publi huge pr ers, plus ates not tomers. The fl work th without generat selves fl incomel again a alternat lence to A. 2000

refugee experience, for most emigrants, has proven to be definitive and to have exacerbated the emotional discontinuity and the physical isolation of dropping out." (Adams 1990, p.8)

The fact of a people culturally remaining in contexts arrived at beyond the conditions that forced them there is the meaning of the Anderson's title (p.11).

Archive boardmember Scott Holmquist points to critical theorist Mark Fisher work to describe the global im-



Excerpt of an article Ariel Lewis in Star Route, May 1988, acknowledging the centrality of pot, freaks and activism to the community. Star Route was a Mateel newsletter.

The possible ways for metropolitan life that cities like Berlin offer exemplify human creativity- humanity's complex eco-social relations are leveraged in the many ways of being urban. Thought insurrectionary long before the Paris Commune or the 60's, the urban can be related to the legacies of 60's countercultures: though people everywhere express their own situatedness as particularly unique experiences of place and history.

The Mateel is not urban, yet city and country can share the fact of people in a situation making a political go of their being different. Jentri Anderson's classic of Humboldt literature, *Beyond Counterculture* helps us think through the logistical fact of counterculture's taking root across decades.

"If the earliest Mateelians were mostly refugees, later arrivals were often less so. Many of these had less extreme reasons for immigration and moved into the community after an alternative social system had already been established. Many of these later arrivals, professionals who were unwilling to assume the economic risk taken by the first Mateelians, also came into the area after the population base was sufficiently large to support them economically. Still, the

plications of the Mateel experience. Fisher sees in neoliberalism a reactionary response to the cultural implications spilling out of the merging of labor, feminist and psychedelic cultures of the countercultural form he termed Acid Communism. Not necessarily directly a result of LSD consumption in every case, Acid Communism suggests that expanded consciousness takes "people out of the currently dominant reality and expose it as provisional, just one form of organization." Neoliberalism appears to give us the freedom to rearrange social-structures to any end without actually providing the political capacity to do so; while keeping in power those interests that have always been in place. Fisher is aware of how concepts of time and political expectation are key to addressing the unevenness of political development since the '60's. "This is not to say, drugs lead immediately to revolution- It didn't... that's part of the problem, impatience. In a lot of the 60's counterculture, people flipped out of dominant culture very quickly and assumed that that was how things were going to go now, and everything would just follow from that. One of the values we need at the moment is a kind of revolutionary patience, really." (Fisher 2016).

(continues..)

This newsletter collages the cities of former East Germany with an area home to California's countercultures in order to approach global questions of human (and ideally non-human) liberation.

So, In relation to the subject of the archive (dirty hippies, pot, breaking the law and building other ways of being), the course of this newsletter will follow these global interests:

1. intimate care
2. communal luxury
3. non-capitalist(& ideally 'secular') ways of living and dying.

-eds.

Berlin and the commons of life  
-a report by our fellow



Sticker found in Kreuzberg, Berlin 2018.

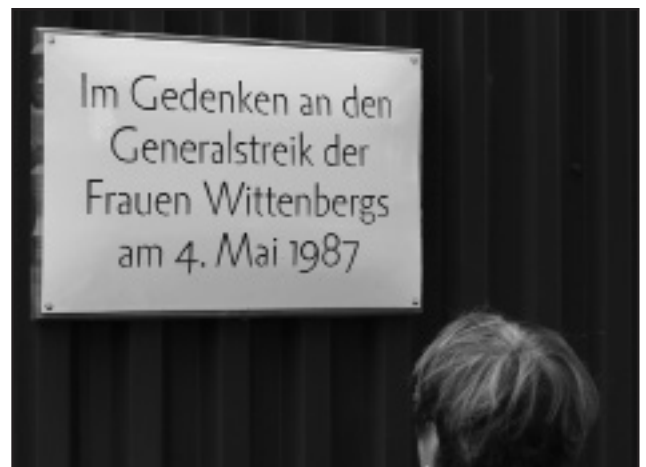
Regarding Berlin, our friends at the radical sound collective Ultra-red ask, "What is the sound of living together in the neighborhood?" A question that could be asked about life anywhere; it gets to the heart of the fact that space is commonly composed; regardless of lines that property, architecture and identity draw.

The city is our common refuge. Answering their own question, Ultra-red and Bizim Kiez hear German, Turkish and Arabic in Kreuzberg during the day. "Towards evening the language of Kotti changed from the ubiquity of German to the polyphony of English, Spanish Italian, Greek and Portuguese. It was difficult to tell whether passersby were just visiting or whether they were here to stay." (Ultra-red 2013). One thing that makes the metropolis wonderful is its capacity to host and mix so much difference in a manner that can

seem to meaningfully dissolve apparent difference. Its space for us to appear-ance provides the perception that we can truly experiment with other ways of caring and sharing with each other.

Since before and after the wall, Berlin has been a cheap city, a place where resourceless ways of being human could survive and in some ways flourish. In that context, there was little incentive to exploit the commonness of being for personal profit. What made Berlin's art scene sleepy in the early Naughts now makes it a competitive struggle.

Unhalted, Google's bid to shit in Kreuzberg promises to push gentrification to astronomic heights. Neoliberalism's charming verbs will appear like mirages for those naive enough to believe that their personal million hides in some crummy corner along Reichenberger Strasse. Profit off your friends and neighbors and you trash meaning and meaningful relations. Profit off others and you are a crook.



Luise Schröder, The forgotten mobilization  
Wittenberg Germany, 2017  
Memorial plaque with inscription in public space,  
Enamel/Oak, 49x72 cm

Im Gedenken an Generalstreik  
der Frauen Wittenbergs am 4.  
Mai 1987 / In memory of the  
Women's General Strike of Wit-  
tenberg on May 4th, 1987

by Luise Schröder

The forgotten mobilization, Wittenberg  
Germany, 2017.

(continues...)



The forgotten mobilization deals with the relationship between historiography, gender and urban space using the example of Lutherstadt Wittenberg. Luise deals with alternative narratives within existing historiography, and with the utopian potentials that can be applied to them. On the basis of a fictitious historical scenario, *The general strike of women of Wittenberg on 4 May 1987*, Luise Schröder asks “what could have happened” in the context of the DDR’s ‘actually existing socialism’. On the one hand, the memorial plaque, designed for public space, evokes while recalling a fictitious historical event while simultaneously discussing the conditions of historiography and historical narratives.



## Elske Rosenfeld and others on a revolution

Elske Rosenfeld is a Berlin-based artist and researcher dealing with the historical legacy of East German state-socialism and its dissidents. Her recent research considers the era that Germans refer to as “die Wende”—the 1989 mass uprising that also led to the fall of the Berlin Wall. During this time it was not a foregone conclusion that East Germany and its Socialist project would disappear into West Germany and its capitalist ways. In this transitional period, the already established independent, dissident and non-authoritarian left blossomed with the collapse of the state-Socialist regime and its security apparatus. Before the first democratic Volkskammer (People’s Chamber, the East German Parliament) elec-

tions, it was assumed that these democratic movements would succeed and the two Germanys would continue to develop along open but independent paths. The fact that the country’s development did not follow this course, when the West German backed conservatives won the elections, did not immediately diminish the efforts of East Germany’s democratic activists. Rosenfeld, along with Kerstin Meyer and Joerg Franzbecker wrote the 5th issue of *berliner hefte zu geschichte und gegenwart der stadt*. (the berlin notebook on the history and present of the city). Their issue is entitled ‘Zur Verfassung’, (‘About the Constitution’) and traces the story the Constitutional Draft for a reformed East Germany written in this period, and its post 1990-afterlife-in particular for the city-state of Berlin.

The book is broken down into two sections.

The first section traces the efforts of the citizen’s movements and representatives of the discredited socialist regime to come together and draft a constitutional frame for a democratic East Germany. It describes the citizen’s movements founding in the opposition circles of the late GDR. The Central Round Table was a political platform where the new political groupings were able to formulate their political ideas and further develop grass-roots democratic practice. For these groups, work on the draft constitution was the direct path to the democratic transformation of an independent GDR. However, with the dissolution of the Round Table after the People’s Chamber election, the citizen movements lost their political influence. The process of how these new groupings entered and clashed with the new representative system—while trying to hold on to their own quite different radical democratic practices and ideals—is another focus of the book.

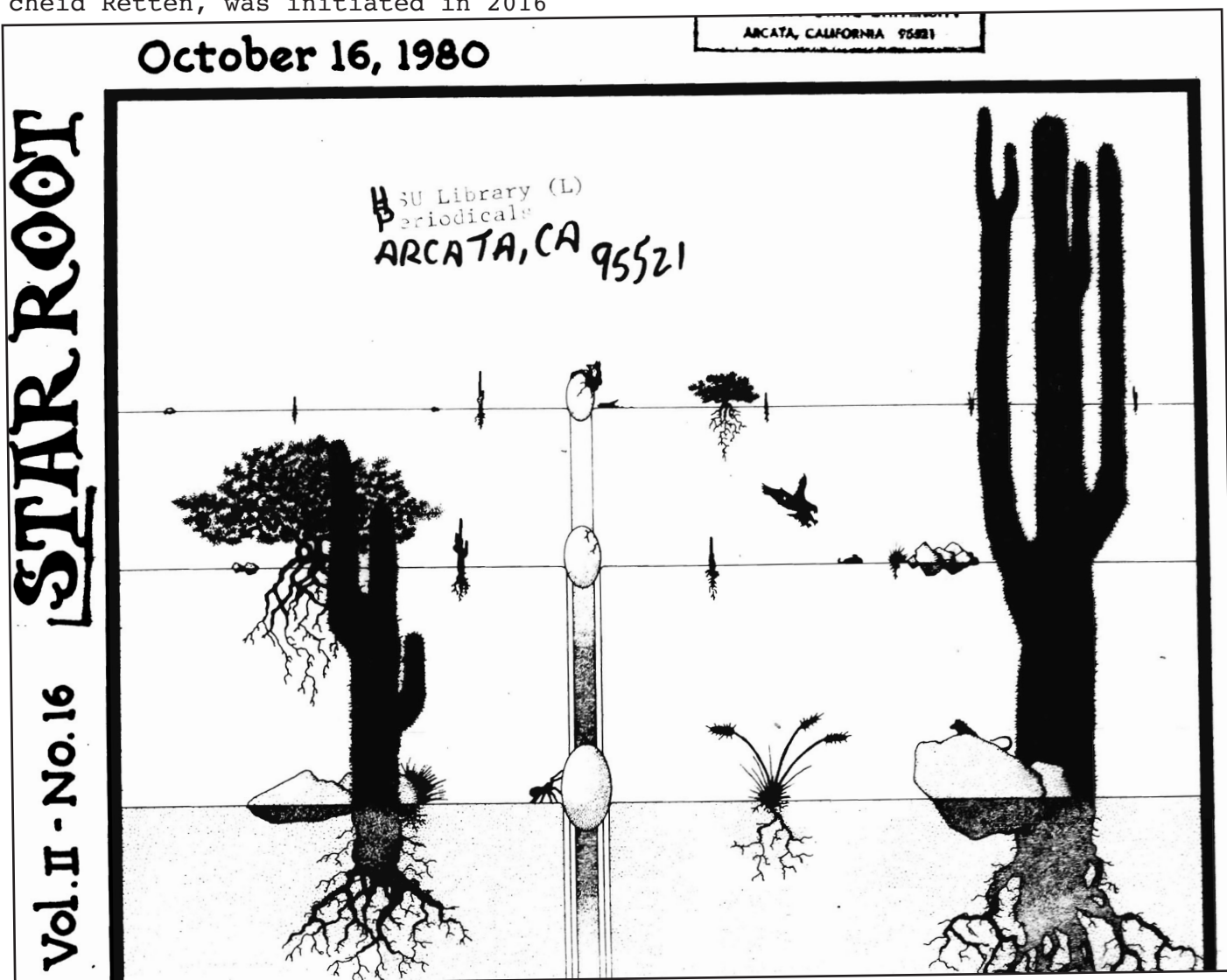
The second section of the book looks at the Constitution Draft’s Berlin afterlife.

(continues...)

In 1990, before the city-state was reunified, a constitution with wide-ranging civil rights— largely adopted from Round Table's Constitution Draft— was in effect in East Berlin for half a year. In the first parliament for the reunited Berlin, efforts to anchor these expanded political rights in the new city's constitution were largely defeated. However, a provision for legislation by the people was adopted. As a result, in the state of Berlin, laws can be passed directly without the parliament by popular vote. In recent years, two laws have been passed in this way: the public disclosure of municipal water contracts and the preservation of the Tempelhofer Feld. Although a majority of Berliners in all districts voted in favor of the latter in May 2014, the governing parties soon tried to overturn the legislation. In response, a new citizens' legislative proposal, Volksentscheid Retten, was initiated in 2016

to strengthen legislation by popular vote in the constitution. These two processes, in 1989/90 and 2016, aimed to enable all Berliners to participate in shaping the constitution. This book traces the connection between the two — one of the few areas in which the largely forgotten radical ideas of 1989 live on.

The book is in German, the authors have made their research documents (also in German) available here: <http://berlinerhefte.de/archiv/>. For further reading on the subject in English see for example Elske's artist website [www.elskerosenfeld.net](http://www.elskerosenfeld.net) or the English section of her blog <http://dissidencies.net/category/english/> — or British author Max Herzberg's website <http://www.maxhertzberg.co.uk/articles/#background>.



Delightful stoner/hippie cover art from the October 16 1980 Star Root periodical covering the Mateel region. Art by Rodney Marchetti.

### **What is the name of your project?**

We are greater form and up till now work in temporary projects. The last project was called: **THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT – Sex, Drugs and Violence.** (an interview with Lina Ruske and Philipp Rödel)

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**Note:** Lina and Philipp were interviewed, by our well-paid and pampered intern, on the subjects of intimate care and communal luxury. Between the commons of the world and its displaced peoples (whether they are ex-urban drop-outs, refugee kids fleeing war zones, or just poor), is a home provided for by the archive and in the interests of the global fellows. We ask readers to note how within this article how the legacies of culture's liberalization play out differently within impoverished communities than in empowered ones.

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### **That's an interesting name.**

We are really into funny project titles- its a project for kids, with kids. One idea is to demonstrate the normalcy of these topics in their lives.

The kids we work with grow up in Leipzig-Grünau, one of the most diverse neighborhoods of the city – with germans, migrants, refugees – but also one of the poorest, with a lot of unemployed, school dropouts etc. So the topics of the project that concern all of us appear here in certain problematic ways.

Teenagers are always interested in these topics. But these kids come to them with narrow perspectives. The kids are really badly informed, or, rather have a lot of prejudices. It's somehow a self-fulfilling prophecy in terms of their living conditions and how this predetermines their lives- e.g. this society doesn't give the boys a perspective for personal growth, for social and economic participation – so crime and the drug economy ultimately gives them some credibility.

### **Tell me more...**

In previous project all the kids wanted to start their own YouTube channel. YouTube represents the possibility to show themselves, to become famous and

rich. This is their longing for a better life. This is also just about being seen – as people...in their everyday, they're not so valued, they don't get positive feedback on who they are. Not by school and not by their families so much, either.

So we decided to do a video project with goal of setting up a youtube channel on the topics they talk about all the time anyway. They call each other "slut", "bitch", call each other homophobic slurs. Drugs are also a topic. Each 12 years old knows someone who is dealing. And most kids have experienced domestic violence, kids get slapped or beaten up. Its normal, its real life for them. They have an idea that its not ok, but because everyone they know deals with it- they lack a perspective, they can't articulate a perspective against it.

The group we worked with was boys and girls. They're always asking stuff like "Whats' porn? Do you know what porn is?" Its a provocation, they know what it is, but they want to talk about it

### **How did the project go.**

So we did it in a neighbourhood youth centre, we had our own space in the back. We did the project over the course of 3 months, one day a week, and a project week in the end. We said "there are no rules, just a project." We literally sat in the front of the space saying, "we are starting a YouTube channel, do you want to join?"

We try to overcome the usual grown-up/kid relation. They come with conceptions of us as grown-ups, as pedagogues – of what is allowed and what's not. One crucial part of our shared learning process is about setting this relation back to zero. This is when the project really starts, when power is replaced by trust. And for us it is also somehow about forgetting about pedagogical responsibility.

### **So How did the project go?**

Though they have a strong desire to become YouTube stars, they mostly have no ideas of what to do in the videos or tend to just wanting to reenact





The eventual staging eventually worked out for the Sex, Drugs... project. In this way, the kids seem to get used to their own image.

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what they like on YouTube. They also lack competencies to set up a task and solve problems.

So, we decided to start very slow – to build an environment where they could experiment in front of the camera and we invented some exercises. For example we made the room dark, with just a spotlight and a camera on them. The video was then live projected in front of them so they could live perform for themselves in a total dark surrounding. A very intense personal experience. Through this, they got used to their own appearance – they needed this to recognise the immediate outcome of their own body and words.

We began doing interviews. We realised it is important to create this open space where they could talk on camera, to get to know one another's lives. A breakthrough moment occurred with 7 kids and us having a live interview for 1 1/2 hours under the live projection. It was a big deal, usually you can only hold them for 3 minute conversations.

**In this moment, what did you talk about?**

We talked about sex drugs and violence.

We talked about family, domestic violence, sexuality, relationships. We asked the kids to interview each other

er – everyone could interview anyone. They also started to ask us about who we are? Are we a couple? Do we have sex? How often do we have sex? Do we plan to get married? Get children?

**We talked earlier whether your approach was to provide a space with no frame, no agenda or if the works grounded in a a queer political position...**

So, here's something that came up in the group interview: One girl was sitting in front of the camera, the other kids were sitting behind it. A boy asked, 'What's your name? How old are you? Are you a bitch?'

She answered "yes", immediately. And we were like, "really? What is a bitch?" And she was like "I actually don't know." And then the whole group was like, "yes you're a bitch" and we had a whole 15 minute conversation of what a bitch is... the kids saying that it's about wearing sexy clothing, kissing boys, etc... In a different context, you might just call it being confident about your sexuality, here it was intended in another way.

It's crazy when a girl sits there, and later she's like, "I'm not actually sure if I am bitch but everyone says I am."

We used the interview to write a dialog and brought it back to the kids and got a good reaction, partially because it's title was **Bitches**. The girls wanted to read it again and again. They brought the boys into it to read the parts. These are kids in hauptschule, in a basic education program, so this creative commitment to reading and performing is a big thing.

**In relation to questions of class, the lives of these kids, let's talk once more about sex, drugs and violence.**

One of the basic things in their everyday– they get told about sex and drugs and violence but not really informed about it. Adults describe a world that is not really there– they explain an ideal but provide no means to achieve it. It just does not work

and leaves out a lot of stuff— for example, that drugs are not just negative, or that there is such a thing as sex-positivity. Our position is that the questions the kids ask should be answered or talked about, straight. Our personal political positions on these topics are not as relevant as the fact of starting and practicing a broader debate. They usually don't have resources to go deeper and space for their issues. We can't change the world they are living in, but we can help them gain a self-determined position that serves them. Also we don't want to be the next ones teaching, especially because of our different class background— rather, we are also learning millions from them.

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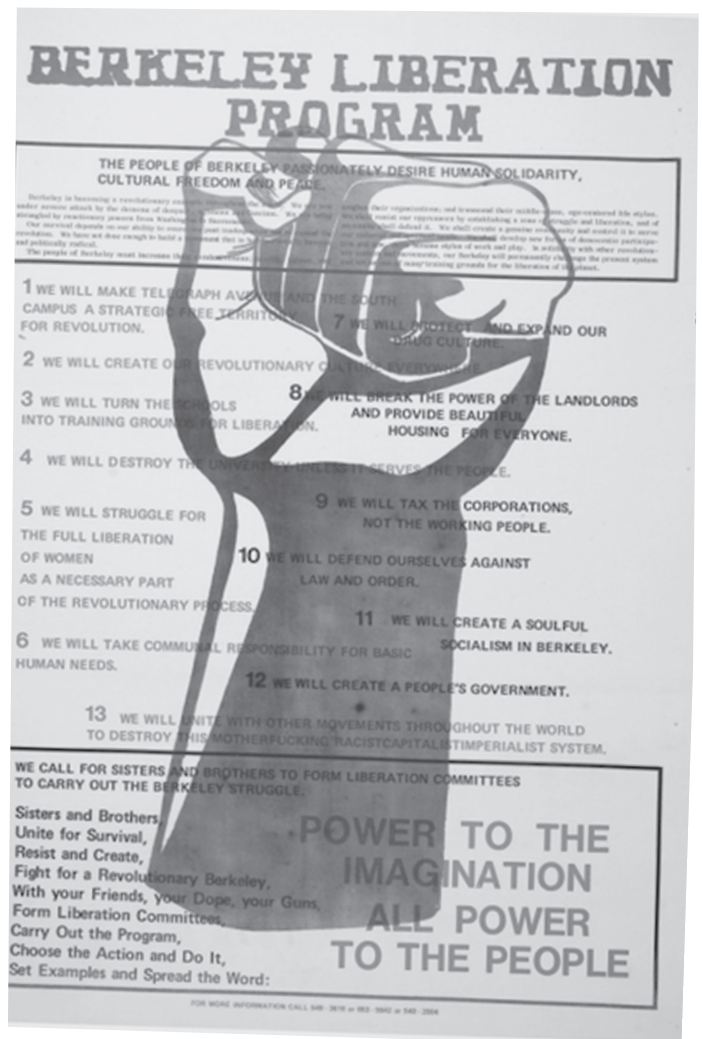
## Notes

1.  
The Newsletter for the Fellow of The Humboldt Area Peoples Archive is a global effort by the Humboldt Area Peoples Archive to communicate a contemporary politics relating to but not limited to the Aquarian moment and/or the head full of the possibility of being, influenced by but not limited to kind bud. Yoga or a bad attitude more than suffice. It should be obvious that this is an anti-capitalist effort.

2.  
Our feeble-minded fellow feels fine about the fact that we are telling you frankly to find a copy of the book he just released, of interest to the Archive's general interests— *Situating Ourselves in Displacement?* Our boy, Marc Herbst, co-edited the book with Paula Cobo-Guevara and Manuela Zechner. It is co-published by the esteemed presses of Minor Compositions and the Journal of Aesthetics & Protest.

3.  
All power to the commune.  
That means the zad, and that place out back where you used to smoke ciggy-butts.

4.  
Expect a new issue of this newsletter in about two months.



Berkeley Liberation Platform, written after the People's Park struggle— focusing on the city as commune. It calls for among other things, cultural (1) and psychedelic freedom (7), and can be seen to influence the development of the Mateel's ideology. Coincidentally the "power fist" was design by Humboldt resident Frank Cierciorka.

## The Humboldt Area Peoples Archive is located at

1086 Redmond Rd  
Eureka CA 95503 – USA

and it can be found online at:  
<http://humboldtareaarchive.org/>

global fellow: Marc Herbst  
local fellow: position to be filled

The archive can also be found wherever people dream, wherever children have a far-away look, and also the end of each rainbow.  
The archive is people (and tapes and documents etc...)

dXdes and comrades!! rodents and snails!! Omnia sunt commune!!